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ABSTRACT

Self-management theory proposes that an individual organize activities around a set of goals that are carefully considered. These goals can help students develop a positive self-concept which in turn correlates with higher achievement. Primary grade teachers generally have ways in which to help learners see themselves as worthy, while in the middle grades this tapers off. In secondary schools, where subject matter assumes major importance, positive self-concept development often is missing altogether. Educators can do no less for students than to help them value education as a purposeful activity the aim of which is to inspire goal-oriented behavior that allows them to make conscious decisions about themselves and to be in control of their destiny--self-determined, self-directed, and self-committed. At the conclusion of this paper, a five-step plan for motivating purposeful thought is followed by 25 ways to foster purposiveness. (KC)

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Purposiveness: A Dimension of the Curriculum to Foster Excellence

Leonore W. Dickmann

'Cheshire Puss,' she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name, 'would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you wa . to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where-,' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

In this scene from Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll is suggesting the need for a sense of purpose within an individual. Without purpose, a person loses all sense of direction.

Unlike Alice, educators do care where the schools are headed. The curriculum they outline within the educational program, is a plan of direction for them to follow.

Yet, one might question to what extent the students are helped to gain a sense of direction within their life purpose. Is it made clear to them that they can create or inherit their future - shape or be shaped by it?

Research in many disciplines has established that a human being is goal-oriented in every critical dimension. Evidence is ample to show that physically, all living tissue is purposive; psychologically, perception is selective; and socially, behavior is over-determined. The dynamic that is crucial, therefore, is the opportunity for optimal growth

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of the self.

In growing, one develops both physically and psychologically. Just as the physical structure has its own needs, so does the psychological self. Just as good nutrition helps the physical body to grow rather than to be crippled, the psychological self needs food to foster its growth to avoid stunting. The psychological self depends on its feeding through the perceptive process. What enters from the environment is the nutrition for growth of the person or personality. Perception builds attitudes, patterns of behavior, and a knowledge base. In the jargon of systems theory, a feedback loop is created. Perceptions creating growth also affect the experiential background for behavior, controlling the very quality of the way a person behaves. Physically or psychologically what affects one affects all.

Curriculum can provide the opportunity for optimal growth of the self. Provision for physical growth is facilitated through the physical education and health program in schools; yet, allowance for psychological growth is only hinted at through an awareness and application of Self Theory.

Research in this area has indicated that students with a positive self-concept show higher achievement. Primary teachers act on this data and have "pet" activities they are proud to share, of ways in which to help learners see themselves as worthy. In the middle grades, however, this emphasis tapers off and is negligible, or even missing altogether as is often the case in the secondary schools where subject matter assumes major importance.

How much stress is given to the competencies for a purposive individual?

- The individual sets goals.
- The individual talks of plans.
- The individual seeks to and does accomplish tasks.
- The individual expresses a purpose for selecting a career - is where he/she is by choice not chance or circumstance.
- The individual demonstrates commitment.
- The individual has an aim in life - seeks a destination.
- The individual has determination.

With the concern today for student involvement in substance abuse, sexual confusion, and acts of violence, it seems imperative to help learners see a purpose in life, gain a greater understanding of self and others in relation to this purpose, and want to make a positive contribution to the human scene. Using purposeful thought a learner can explore the range of alternatives, options, and choices for his full potentialities.

The subject matter of the curriculum must not only provide content about a subject such as social studies but also information about the "subject" or person himself in relation to this context, the implications for social interaction of human beings. The curriculum must not only give facts concerning a field such as science but concepts that guide the learner in his relation to nature and his environment. The course of study must not only present data and manipulations of data

in math classes but offer a way of thinking for the individual about functional patterns, languages, and even an openness to infinity.

Students need and deserve teachers who involve them in teacher-pupil planning, help them to understand the implications of "conscious intent," and inspire them to want to control their destiny.

Self-management Theory proposes that an individual organize activities around a set of goals that are carefully considered. After careful consideration, deliberate choice follows. To stop here, however, is to fall short of purposeful activity towards goal completion.

A direct strategy that holds promise for motivating purposeful thought and behavior is to offer students a five step plan for self-direction:

1. State your broad goal or goals with conscious decisioning. (These may be short-range, intermediate, or long-range).
2. List specific objectives that will promote definite conduct toward the goal.
3. Outline the procedures that will allow self-determined movement towards the objectives. (This may include daily, weekly, or monthly review).
4. Set targets that are measurable in terms of established criteria. (These may include time, money, space, distance, etc.)
5. Evaluate outcomes in terms of established criteria. (Acceptance of the plan, modification, or revision may be in order).

An outline such as this, a modification of the Management by Objectives model, which is helpful in fostering purposive action in the adult world can be an aid to learners at any level in their need

for purposive behavior. Youth in crisis, whose 3 R's have been identified as robbery, rape, and rebellion, need and deserve a model that can offer a sense of purpose for them, give a direction for self-behavior, and point a path to their future.

The future is seen as having but one constant - change. Some futurists even speak of the "change of change." Educators can do no less for students than to help them value education as a purposeful activity whose aim is to inspire goal-oriented behavior that allows them to make conscious decisions about themselves and to be in control of their destiny - self-determined, self-directed, and self-committed within the "change of change."

Twenty-five Ways to Foster Purposiveness

- acquaint students with the framework of short-range, intermediate, and long-range goals.
- help students to set broad goals within the framework.
- teach students how to establish specific objectives toward goals.
- discuss with students procedures for movement towards their objectives.
- ask students to state measurable targets for goal completion.
- encourage students to evaluate progress made.
- examine with students, blueprints for houses and create them.
- view with students, designs for machines and create some.
- read recipes with students and follow some.

- collaborate with students on a set of methods for accomplishing something such as bringing up a baby.
- plan a trip with students and take it.
- look at a dress pattern with students and discuss its relation to the goal.
- make a chart with students stressing sequence.
- check on organization of the constellations with students.
- share a flow-chart with students.
- read a guide with students.
- follow a set of directions with students.
- explore patterns in nature with students.
- encourage students to create their own blueprints, designs, recipes, set of methods, plans, patterns, flow charts, guides.
- collect with students, vocabulary related to purposiveness such as self-direction, self-command, definite means, definite conduct, purposeful thought, purposeful behavior, order, methods, patterns, planning, commitment, destination, etc.
- use goal setting criteria with students such as:
    - Is it desirable?
    - Is it believable?
    - Is it conceivable?
    - Is it controllable?
    - Is it measurable?
    - Is it achievable?
    - Is it specifiable?
    - Is it growth-facilitating?

- Who are you?
- Where are you?
- What do you want?
- Why do you want it?
- How will it help you get what you want?
- Will it help you and others?

- share biographies and stories of purposive individuals with students.
- collect quotes that stress purposive behavior and use with students.
- ask students to bring in news items concerning individuals who demonstrate purposiveness.
- have fun with "pie-in-the-sky goals" why not?!